The Impact of Mobile Usage Patterns on Risk-Taking Behavior

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Abstract

Among the popular press, excessive smartphone usage is often broadcast as being associated with adverse outcomes, including greater risk taking, poor social adjustment, and impaired cognitive functioning. However, there is scant empirical evidence that supports these claims. Our study investigated whether the duration of smartphone ownership (exposure) affects smartphone usage pattern (screen-time), and whether their interaction is associated with risk-taking behavior (Benthin Risk Perception questionnaire). We found that those with lower screen-time reported engaging in a higher frequency of risky activities like vandalism of property, B = -4.80, SE = 1.65, t = -2.91, p ¡ 0.01. Screen-time was inversely associated with risk taking among individuals characterized by less exposure, B=4.66, SE=2.01, t=2.32, p=0.03. Altogether, these early findings illustrate how the impact of screen-time on real-life behaviors may not be as one-sided as mass media portrays.